



P.O. Box 2207 206 South Main Street Greenville SC 29602

NEWS UPDATE

Contact: Candace Sommer
Office: 864.467.4470
Cell: 864.449.3840
sommerc@greatergreenville.com

August 22, 2003

Structural Engineer Says South Main Street Buildings and Adjoining Polycraft Building Are "A House of Cards"

Friday, August 22, 2003

Independent structural engineer Tad Boland submitted a report to the City on the condition of the Surratt and Mitchell buildings on South Main Street in which he states that the structural deficiencies of Surratt and Mitchell buildings combined with the continuing collapse of the Polycraft building make any demolition attempts dangerous -- even with bracing and shoring present.

Mr. Boland's comments are based on his visual observations made during an assessment of the Mitchell and Surratt properties on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. Observations in his report include:

- There are shear cracks in the Mitchell building that extend completely through the exterior walls which indicate that there is already some degree of shear failure in the walls. The existence of cracks in the Surratt building could not be determined due to wall coverings.
- There is a slight buckle in the exterior wall at the southwest corner of the Mitchell building above the second floor level.

- There is evidence of past rotting of the ends of some of the frame members (floor joists) of the main floor beams in the Mitchell Building.
- There is evidence of past fire damage to some of the main floor joists in the Mitchell building that is visible through the painted members.
- There is evidence of a destructive effect of weathering on the brick and mortar on the north wall of the Surratt property.

Structural engineer Boland adds in his report that the weakened and dangerous condition of the Polycraft and South Main Street buildings could be referred to as a “house of cards” warning that there is a potential for disaster and that it is getting worse each day.

The City is sharing copies of Mr. Boland’s report today with Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Surratt, the owners of the Arcite building, and the engineers retained by Mrs. Surratt and the Hughes.

Also, today, Mark Peters, structural engineer retained by the Hughes, conducted a detailed structural inspection of the Surratt and Mitchell properties. The City anticipates a preliminary report from Mr. Peters on Monday.

Attachments:

Copy of engineer Boland’s letter

Photos: Cracks in Mitchell Building exterior

Photo: Shift in corner of Mitchell building exposing insulation

[end]